



March 2020 Report re new Diploma Financial System

Written by the Diploma Working Group (DWG) and Permaculture Association (PA) Staff

Background

- The existing financial system has not been changed since Oct 2013 when the last Fees Guide was written. No increase in fees have been made since this document.
- The DWG underwent a strategic review of the Diploma system during 2018-19 and its top recommendation was to redesign the financial system as the current system is financially unsustainable and has various flaws in its mechanisms. If you wish to know more about these problems identified then you are welcome to look at the Financial Report from the DWG Strategy work. Please ask to be sent a copy. It can be seen [here](#)
- There is a working group consisting of DWG members and PA Staff developing a new system
- We hope to launch the new financial system later this year. We are not ready yet as we want to get the design right, so we currently carrying out surveys and financial modelling

Our Hopes

- We hope the new financial system will create a good cash flow for the Diploma System to be able to flourish rather than survive.
- That a flourishing system will enable more support and opportunities for everyone involved.
- It should also provide motivation for apprentices to keep working on their diploma pathway and encourage a higher completion rate.
- There will be a lower burden on staff time and a clearer financial system for the PA.
- There should also be more flexibility for apprentices to increase and decrease their activity according to their individual circumstances and changing situations.
- And finally we hope this will rid the apprentices of guilt for not getting on with something they have paid for. In the new system they can request to stop payments, take a formally agreed pause and be guilt free.
- We will ensure that the new system enables apprentices to have an affordable option to complete the Diploma and the option to pause their Diploma if they need to.

The Current Proposal

Existing Apprentices

- All existing apprentices will be given a transition period, which has been agreed to be 24 months, giving them the opportunity to complete the Diploma on the old system.
- During this transition period, those apprentices who are still paying for their Diploma will carry on with their existing payment system. Those apprentices who have completed their payments already will be asked to pay the £10 annual fee as required in the current Fees Guide.
- Apprentices who have not been accredited by the end of the transition period will then transfer to the new system.
- We will work with Diploma Apprentices that have started recently to ensure that the transition process works for them.

The new system

- All **new** apprentices from the launch date will pay for their diploma in a very different way to the existing system. This will consist of a monthly or annual membership fee to the PA to cover the new Diploma service and development costs.
- The cost of tutorials and any other fee normally paid to tutors will be paid directly to tutors by the apprentice instead of through the PA.
- We have not agreed the monthly / annual fee but we are currently carrying out financial modelling and surveys to ascertain this figure. The fee will include membership of the PA and specific services from PA staff to apprentices.
- We will ensure that the new system enables apprentices to have an affordable option to complete the Diploma and the option to pause their Diploma if they need to.
- We have not agreed on a launch date yet but we hope that it will be in the latter half of this year.
- We have not finalised the details of the specific services to apprentices but they are likely to include a monthly newsletter, a new website, monthly webinars, **and other services that are identified and prioritised with Apprentices.**
- In the new system the fee per hour for tutorials will remain the same and the length of a tutorial can be negotiated between the apprentice and tutor.
- The payment due for assessment work will increase as the time allocated to carry out assessment work is too low. The hours allocated to assessment are yet to be decided but are proposed to increase.
- Apprentices on the new system will be able to request to formally pause their diploma and their monthly fees if their circumstances prevent them from committing time to progress their diploma pathway.
- Over the coming months we will work with Apprentices and tutors to identify the best way to support low income Apprentices.
- We plan to have a new monitoring system for recording apprentice progression

These proposals have been developed by members of the Diploma Working Group (including Apprentices) and staff over the last 18 months. We welcome apprentices' creative design input into finalising the details of the new Diploma system so that we can ensure that the transition to the new system works for everyone. Thanks!